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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 1911

THE PURPOSE AND SPIRIT OF THE
UNIVERSITY¹

CONTENTS

<i>The Purpose and Spirit of the University:</i> PRESIDENT GEORGE E. VINCENT	977
<i>Courses in Higher Pure Mathematics:</i> PROFESSOR G. A. MILLER	984
<i>Williamina Paton Fleming:</i> ANNIE J. CAN- NON	987
<i>The Society for the Promotion of Engineer- ing Education</i>	988
<i>The Indianapolis Meeting of the American Chemical Society:</i> PROFESSOR CHARLES L. PARSONS	989
<i>Scientific Notes and News</i>	990
<i>University and Educational News</i>	992
<i>Discussion and Correspondence:—</i>	
<i>The Diseases of Economic Plants:</i> PRO- FESSOR F. L. STEVENS	993
<i>Scientific Books:—</i>	
<i>Moorehead on the Stone Age in North America:</i> CHARLES C. WILLOUGHBY. <i>Hil- ditch's History of Chemistry:</i> DR. F. W. CLARKE. <i>Friend on the Chemistry of Paints:</i> PROFESSOR A. H. GILL	995
<i>The Work of the Marine Biological Station of the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries, at Beau- fort, N. C.:</i> DR. HENRY D. ALLER	997
<i>The Biological Effects of Radium:</i> DR. WM. ALLEN PUSEY	1001
<i>Special Articles:—</i>	
<i>On the Classification of Sand Grains:</i> PRO- FESSOR AMADEUS W. GRABAU	1005
<i>Societies and Academies:—</i>	
<i>The Anthropological Society of Washing- ton:</i> DR. T. MICHELSON. <i>Research Workers in Experimental Biology:</i> LEWIS W. PETZER. <i>The New York Section of the American Chemical Society:</i> C. M. JOYCE .	1007

MODERN students of human nature have changed the old saying, "Many men, many minds," into the new dictum, "One man, many selves." There is much talk of multiple personality. Our complex modern life reflects itself in a composite person. A man is said to have as many selves as there are social groups of which he feels himself a member. To maintain a business self which can look a moral self straight in the eye, to have a theological self on good terms with a scientific self, to keep the peace between a party self and a patriotic self, to preserve in right relations a church self and a club self—such are the present problems of many a man or woman. One way to escape embarrassment is to invite at a given time only congenial and harmonious selves, and to banish from the company the selves that are discordant and disconcerting. The strong soul is he who can summon all his selves into loyal team play. Personality is the name men give to this unity of the self, and purpose is the organizing principle. Only as many groups of thought and feeling are schooled into cooperation by a well-considered, steadfast aim can a man be master of a single self. To be sure, unity of a sort can be achieved by one who has a meager company of selves. Narrowness, provincialism, bigotry, describe a personality in which unity of purpose is won at a sacrifice of breadth, outlook and sympathy. The highest type of personality grows out of many far-reaching selves which have

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¹ Commencement address of the president at the University of Wisconsin.